

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): A process for preparing an aqueous dispersion of a pigment, comprising:

(A) kneading a mixture containing a pigment, a polymer having a salt-forming group, a neutralizing agent for neutralizing the polymer having a salt-forming group, an organic solvent and water, wherein the concentration of solid matter is 50 to 80% by weight;

(B) adding water and/or an organic solvent to the resulting kneaded mixture to dilute the mixture; and

(C) dispersing the solid matter in the resulting diluted mixture,

wherein the resulting kneaded mixture is subjected to the step (B) after the mixture is kneaded with a kneader and further kneaded with a roll-mill in the step (A).

Claim 2 (Original): The process for preparing an aqueous dispersion of a pigment according to claim 1, wherein the temperature during kneading is at most 50°C in the step (A).

Claim 3 (Cancelled).

Claim 4 (Original): The process for preparing an aqueous dispersion of a pigment according to claim 1, wherein the solid matter in the diluted mixture is dispersed with a high-pressure homogenizer in the step (C).

Claim 5 (Original): A water-based ink comprising the aqueous dispersion of a pigment, obtained by the process of claim 1.

Claim 6 (New): The process as claimed in Claim 1, wherein the pigment is at least one organic pigment selected from the group consisting of an azo pigment, a diazo pigment, a phthalocyanine pigment, a quinacridone pigment, an isoindolinone pigment, a dioxazine pigment, a perylene pigment, a perinone pigment, a thioindigo pigment, an anthraquinone pigment, a quinophthalone pigment.

Claim 7 (New): The process according to Claim 1, wherein the pigment is at least one inorganic pigment selected from the group consisting of carbon black, a metal oxide, a metal sulfide, a metal chloride.

Claim 8 (New): The process according to Claim 1, wherein the pigment is carbon black.

Claim 9 (New): The process according to Claim 1, wherein the polymer is at least one selected from the group consisting of a vinyl polymer, a polyester polymer, a polyurethane polymer.

Claim 10 (New): The process according to Claim 1, wherein the polymer is a vinyl polymer including polymerized units of styrene, (meth)acrylic acid and (meth)acrylic acid ester.

Claim 11 (New): The process according to Claim 1, wherein the polymer has a weight average molecular weight of from 52,000 to 300,000.

Claim 12 (New): The process according to Claim 1, wherein the kneading is carried out with a kneader.

Claim 13 (New): The process according to Claim 1, wherein the roll-mill is a double roll-mill or a triple roll-mill.

Claim 14 (New): The process according to Claim 1, further comprising supplying the pigment, the polymer, the neutralizing agent, the organic solvent and the water to a kneading device before the kneading, separately.

Claim 15 (New): The process according to Claim 1, further comprising:
before the kneading, mixing the polymer, the organic solvent, for water and the neutralizing agent in a separate container to form a pre-mixture, and
supplying the pre-mixture to the kneading device, and
supplying the pigment to the kneading device.

Claim 16 (New): The process according to Claim 1, wherein the average particle diameter of the pigment after step (C) is from 152 to 162 nm.

Claim 17 (New): The process according to Claim 1, wherein both water and an organic solvent are added to the resulting kneaded mixture.

Claim 18 (New): The process according to Claim 1, wherein only water is added to the resulting kneaded mixture in step (B).

Claim 19 (New): The process according to Claim 1, wherein only an organic solvent is added to the resulting kneaded mixture in step (B).

Claim 20 (New): The process according to Claim 1, wherein the roll-mill is used while adding water to a kneaded mixture.

DISCUSSION OF THE AMENDMENT

Claims 1-2 and 4-20 are active in the present application. Claim 3 is a cancelled claim. Independent Claim 1 is amended herein to include the limitations of previous dependent Claim 3. Claims 6-20 are new claims. Support for new Claim 6 is found on page 3, lines 16-19. Support for new Claims 7 and 8 is found on page 3, lines 11-15. Support for new Claims 9-11 is found on page 4, lines 15-22. Support for new Claim 12 is found on page 6, lines 19-23. Support for new Claim 13 is found in the sentence bridging pages 6 and 7. Support for new Claim 14 is found on page 7, lines 4-11. Support for new Claim 15 is found on page 7, lines 11-16. Support for new Claim 16 is found in Tables 1 and 2 on page 19. Support for new Claims 17-19 is found on original Claim 1. Support for new Claim 20 is found on page 6, lines 19-24 and page 12, lines 1-5.

No new matter is believed to have been added by this amendment.